

New “American Parks, American Products” legislation will require U.S. National Parks sell “Made in the USA” goods

Ronkonkoma, NY – On Thursday, Rep Steve Israel (D – Huntington) announced new legislation to put “Made in the USA” goods back into the stores at America’s national parks and monuments. America’s national parks and monuments are home to gift shops selling patriotic products. However, the bulk of those products sales aren’t helping create jobs for American workers, but putting people to work in China or elsewhere.

“When I walk into one of the gift shops at our monuments or national parks, it’s deeply deflating that nearly every item – from American flag mugs to Theodore Roosevelt teddy bears – comes with a ‘Made in China’ sticker,” said Rep. Israel. “If we want American manufacturing to thrive again, then we need to show that we believe in it. That’s why I’m introducing legislation to bring ‘Made in the USA’ back to our nation’s proudest sites.”

Roger Clayman, Executive Director of the Long Island Federation of Labor said, “The Long Island Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, would like to thank Congressman Israel for his commitment to promoting American made products. His efforts will support the livelihoods of millions of hard-working Americans, including union members, who are capable of building, maintaining and servicing the American economy. There are 25 million people in our country who need full-time work, and there is plenty of work to be done. Impala Press, where we are gathered today, is a good example of a unionized, American facility that can get the job done for the public or private sectors.”

Rep. Israel’s new legislation, the “American Parks, American Products Act,” will require that all items sold by the National Parks Service in gift shops, visitors centers and at the National Archives are made in the USA.

At present, a large number of items sold at national parks and monuments are produced

abroad, many in China. The current U.S. trade deficit with China is at a record high with a \$273 billion trade gap between what the U.S. imports v. exports from China. The overall U.S. trade deficit is \$497 billion and that was projected to grow in 2011.

According to ABC News, “Economists say that if every one of us spent an extra \$3.33 on U.S.-made goods every year, it would create nearly 10,000 new jobs in this country.”

With other National Parks Service divisions, the Commercial Services Program administers more than 500 concession contracts that, in total, gross over \$1 billion annually.

New York has 22 national parks which were visited by more than 17.5 million people in 2010. New York’s manufacturers employ 228,100 people and manufacturing output totaled \$58.8 billion in 2009.

In 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the “Buy American Act” into law. The legislation creates a preference for American goods in government purchases. The “American Parks, American Products Act” follows the precedent set by FDR of encouraging domestic manufacturing and job creation through government purchases.